

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



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C208

1. Mr. O'Riordan
2. Mr. Kennedy
To see SPT

Washington file

7/9/1

TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON
FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

ROUTED MESSAGE

PRIORITY URGENT

12-5 CONFIDENTIAL

DATE 8/5/62 TIME 0125

INITIALS SGBarley

KJHGF

TO Be copied Monday
PLEASE COPY PERM REP NY

IN A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION A HIGHLY PLACED SOURCE IN THE STATE DEPT HAS EXPRESSED DISAPPROVAL OF OUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AND ACTIONS ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CRISIS. HIS VIEWS WERE PERSONAL AND IT WAS NOT HIS INTENTION THAT THEY BE CONVEYED TO YOU.

2. THIS SOURCE SEES THE FALKLANDS CRISIS AS A SITUATION IN WHICH INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIONS (I.E. THE ARGENTINE INVASION OF THE ISLANDS) COULD BE BROUGHT TO HEEL THROUGH FIRM DISCIPLINARY MEASURES. THERE ARE NOT TOO MANY SITUATIONS IN TODAY'S WORLD WHERE THIS CAN BE DONE, IN HIS VIEW, POLAND AND AFGHANISTAN BEING NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF THE SUCCESSFUL FLOUTING OF INTERNATIONAL MORAL PRINCIPLES. IF THE ARGENTINE MILITARY JUNTA ARE ALLOWED TO GET AWAY WITH THIS AGGRESSION, A MOST UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT WILL HAVE BEEN SET FOR OTHER AREAS IN LATIN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE. THIS VIEW IS CLAIMED TO BE WIDELY SHARED IN LATIN AMERICA, A RECENT SOURCE CITED BEING THE ACTION DEMOCRATICA CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF VENEZUELA WHO WARNED OF THE DANGERS FOR THE REGION SHOULD BE ARGENTINE JUNTA EMERGE SUCCESSFULLY FROM THE PRESENT CONFRONTATION. AT LEAST SEVEN SENSITIVE AREAS, AMONG THEM GUYANA AND BELISE, WERE MENTIONED AS BEING SUSCEPTIBLE TO GREATER RISKS OF SUBVERSION IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. THIS STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCE DISCOUNTS THE DAMAGE TO US INTERESTS IN LATIN AMERICA CONSEQUENT UPON US SUPPORT FOR BRITAIN, THOUGH CONCEDED THAT SUCH DAMAGE IS LIKELY. "THERE ARE TIMES IN WHICH LOSSES HAVE TO BE SUSTAINED IN DEFENCE OF PRINCIPLES" IS THE REPLY TO REFERENCE TO THIS ASPECT. PRINCIPLE IS THUS THE REASON INVOKED FOR US SUPPORT OF BRITAIN, EVEN THOUGH MY SOURCE FRANKLY CONCEDES THAT "THERE IS NO WAY THE BRITISH ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO HOLD ON TO THOSE ISLANDS". AN EVENTUAL TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLANDS IS THEREFORE FORESEEN, BUT THE POINT IS THAT THIS SHOULD NOT OCCUR IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD MAKE AGGRESSION LOOK JUSTIFIED OR PROFITABLE.

4. THE REPROACH LEVELLED AT IRELAND IS THAT, FROM AN EARLIER POSITION WHICH SUPPORTED FIRM ACTION TO CURB ARGENTINE AGGRESSION, WE ARE SEEN AS HAVING "TURNED THROUGH 180 DEGREES" AFTER THE SINKING OF THE BELGRANO. MY EXPLANATION THAT THIS IN OUR VIEW CREATED A TOTALLY NEW SITUATION WAS COUNTERED BY THE ARGUMENT THAT MILITARY ACTION WAS CLEARLY IMPLICIT IN BRITAIN'S STANCE FROM THE BEGINNING. ALTHOUGH I EXPLAINED OUR UN ACTIVITY IN LANGUAGE WHICH CLOSELY FOLLOWED THAT USED BY PERMREP UN IN THE TELEXES COPIED TO ME, I DO NOT FEEL THAT I MADE MUCH IMPRESSION ON MY INTERLOCUTOR, WHO IS CLEARLY COMMITTED (A) TO THE BRITISH POSITION, (B) TO THE DEFENCE OF BRITAIN AS THE MOST LOYAL ALLY OF THE US AND (C) TO "PRINCIPLE", IN THE SENSE OF A BELIEF IN THE VALIDITY OF THE USE OF FORCE TO DEFEND OR IMPOSE INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES. I ENQUIRED WHETHER THIS CRITICISM OF IRELAND WAS AN OFFICIAL VIEW WHICH I SHOULD CONVEY TO MY AUTHORITIES AND WAS GIVEN A NEGATIVE REPLY.

5. THE ABOVE VIEWS WERE EXPRESSED BY A PERSON WHO IS NOT ONLY IN A KEY POLICY POST IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT BUT IS PERSONALLY CLOSE TO SECRETARY HAIG. HOWEVER HIS VIEWS WERE DESCRIBED SEVERAL TIMES AS PERSONAL, THE CONVERSATION WAS FRIENDLY AND THE CRITICISM TOOK THE FORM OF BEWILDERMENT AT IRELAND'S APPARENT CHANGE OF FRONT RATHER THAN ANY ACCUSATION OF ILL-WILL ON OUR PART. OUR GOOD FAITH IN WHAT WE TRIED TO DO AT THE UN WAS NOT CHALLENGED, THOUGH THE PRACTICALITY OF THAT COURSE, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT MIGHT EVER LEAD TO ARGENTINE WITHDRAWAL, WAS DISPUTED. A CLEAR DISTINCTION WAS MADE IN THIS CONVERSATION BETWEEN THIS ISSUE AND ANOTHER MATTER OF IMPORTANCE TO US ON WHICH THE PERSON CONCERNED HAS BEEN AND HAS PROMISED TO BE HELPFUL TO US.

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND PARTICULARLY SINCE NO OFFICIAL POSITION HAS BEEN TAKEN, I FEEL ANY OFFICIAL REACTION ON OUR PART WOULD BE INADVISABLE, APART FROM THE FACT THAT THE ABOVE CONVERSATION WAS NOT INTENDED FOR RELAY TO YOU. I SHOULD BE OBLIGED IF ABOVE COULD BE COPIED TO PERMREP UN WITH WHOM I HAVE HAD A BRIEF CONVERSATION ABOUT THIS. WHEN THE CRISIS HAS RECEDED A LITTLE I PROPOSE TO ARRANGE AN INFORMAL DINNER HERE AT WHICH DORR HAS AGREED TO BE PRESENT IN ORDER TO DESCRIBE OUR POLICY AND PARTICULARLY OUR UN EFFORT IN A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. I FEEL THAT ANY NECESSARY FENCE-MENDING COULD BEST BE DONE IN THAT WAY.

END END

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